

Greeting dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Katia Daley, I am a resident from Vernon, CT. I am formerly undocumented and come from a family of mixed immigration status. I am also an organizer with Connecticut Students for a Dream and I stand in support of I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

My family came to the United States in 2009 with the hopes to find better opportunities for our families. When the harsh reality of inaccessibility of resources hit us, it was very overwhelming. Going to the doctor was very stressful and difficult for my family as we were unable to make sure that we were not going to be diagnosed with something that could cost our family a financial burden. If I had pain, I waited out and didn't complain because I knew this would not help my family's situation.

I want to share my story from when I was in my sophomore year of high school. I was a varsity athlete on my volleyball team. At one of the away games, I had just finished warming up with my teammate and when I was retrieving the ball, I jumped in an awkward way, and when I landed I sprained my ankle. It hurt so much, but I didn't say anything. I played the first set without complaining but my coach had already figured out something was wrong. She pulled me out and asked me why I was limping? I told her that I had sprained my ankle and that I was in pain. She was of course furious and took me out of the game. I started crying, and my teammates tried to calm me down and let me know that the pain would go away. I let them know that it wasn't the pain that was making me cry. It was that I didn't know how I was going to let my parents know that I needed an x-ray, physical therapist, and pain relievers. The thought that I would be a financial burden to my family scared me so much.

I let you know my story, although not life-threatening, it highlights the way how undocumented children need to mature. We understand our parent's burdens, but we lose our childhood in the process. I needed to understand that my actions could have a great impact on my family's finances. That me not being able to have access to healthcare would be so detrimental to my family at that moment.

With my story, I invite you to think of children in your families. Understand that these children are our future and not rob them of their childhood by thinking about their healthcare and how they can make sure that their families don't suffer the financial burdens because of sports accidents.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Katia Daley

Healthcare Campaign Organizer
Connecticut Students for a Dream